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An analysis of what educational television is and how it can be used is presented. It may be considered as a vehicle for conveying a message and as an educational tool. It can be a supplement for books as well as a motivator for using books and for learning. It can enlarge one's range of experience in a low-powered, slowly paced, informal manner. (Other visual media may be used in conjunction with television.) The principal disadvantage of television is that it cannot be repeated; key points must be emphasized in some other way.

Many programs are provided by the Educational Television and Radio Center. It is suggested that local teachers develop their own live programs.

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INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY - U.S.C.
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TELEVISION AND OTHER MEDIA

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One fact more than any other distinguishes the field of work in which all of us have been engaged in the last ten, twenty or thirty years--whether radio, the film, television, or the audio-visual field in general. We have never had a chance to catch our breath. Before we knew how to make and use the silent film, the 16 mm. sound film was on us. Before we learned how to use radio, television was on our heels. Apparently we must follow the rule for living which Satchell Paige gave: "Don't look back, something may be gaining on you." We're also somewhat in the position of the lady in 1932 who said that it was too bad we had all this unemployment at the same time as we were having the depression.

We face this problem because hundreds of millions of dollars are being successfully spent upon mechanical inventions while nickels and dimes are being spent on those social inventions necessary to keep us up with the social changes produced by these new inventions. We have learned through these electronic devices to multiply mass messages endlessly--messages which we can get effortlessly in our homes. We don't need to go to the movie theatre, we don't even need to read. We can look and listen.

We're in the same boat as Benjamin Franklin who in the little boy's essay--walked the streets of Philadelphia, bought two loaves of bread, put one under each arm, met a beautiful girl, was married, and then discovered electricity. We have discovered what

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electricity can do in multiplying and sending messages. What we must now do is develop social inventions to use the mechanical inventions most skillfully.

I

I shall try to analyze what educational television is--what we might do with the medium if we understood it, if we thought of it in its long-time possibilities. Let us forego for a little while the pressing, emergency problems of television and see if we can't have a long-view as well as the ever-present close-up.

Television may be considered both as a neutral vehicle for conveying a message--and also as specific educational material. When we think of books we concern ourselves not only with printing as a way of duplicating words and pictures, but also with the subject-matter in the books.

If I were to make only one statement about television as an educational tool, I would emphasize it as a multiple-medium device. It is radio, it is the film-strip, it is the photograph, it is the museum, it is the exhibit; it is a blackboard, a felt-board, a poster, a field trip, a demonstration. Sometimes it is reading as in the trade names or slogans, simple charts, blackboard material. It is all of these things singly and, far more important, it is all of these things put together in an integrated way and served up with a warm friendly personal voice.

How do these characteristics of television--and I have been inaccurately brief--tie in with the characteristics of effective communication? In his Seventh Letter Plato makes the point that "the core of his message cannot be written down, but can be transmitted only from individual teacher to individual pupil, when teacher and pupil know each other intimately, from the experience of living and talking together. Under such conditions the teacher can present his message in precisely the form in which it is appropriate to the mind of his pupil. All other forms and conditions of communication represent so many declensions from this summit. There is a loss in precision, or effectiveness, or

both, as soon as the teacher commits his message to a fixed form of written words, or as soon as the single pupil becomes a class of two or more."*

I think this theory of communication of two thousand years ago has relevance today. Today we have been committed to books as ways of learning and we would all agree that without books intellectual maturity is not possible. But Plato's criticism of a book or a monologue as fixed or inflexible does have relevance. Feed-back from the person spoken to may be absent. In schools certainly there is a tendency for memorization of books, for repetition of the words of the writer.

Another weakness of an exclusively book approach is that emphasis is placed on generalizations instead of generalizing. I am all for the well-stocked mind--one does not have to believe in faculty psychology to accept this idea--but in this inventive and changing world it is singularly important that schools and colleges develop the art of learning and a taste for learning. I do not say that subject-matter will take care of itself--but subject-matter must not be communicated in such a way as to decrease the art and ability to learn nor to cause a distaste for learning. Every medium, and this includes books, can be abused.

We are moving away from the old idea of "No more teachers, no more books, no more teachers' homely looks." Books are better than they ever were before. But I do want to remind you that in Stanley Diamond's citizenship study in Detroit he concluded that very little problem-solving was being taught in any of the schools studied. Books, the recorded experiences of people who have solved certain problems, have relevance because they can help someone else solve these problems. Television can motivate learning by showing people with problems that some of the subject-matter needed to solve these problems is in books but not all of it. I suggest strongly that television can help us understand that not all people who can read books are literate and that not all

* Bambrough, Renford, "The Philosophy of Broadcasting." The BBC Quarterly VII (Winter 1952-53), p. 223.

persons who cannot read books are stupid. Life is experiencing, it is generalizing, conceptualizing, it is a warm and intimate taking in of the initially unclassified experiences of life. Many of the answers to problems are partially contained in books. But the real problems are those of persons living, breathing, sensient beings.

II

What does all this have to do with television? I see educational television often presenting life in its less organized, less classified form. Subjects, classified subject matter, follow life far more often than they precede it. The Ding-Dong Lady, Frances Horwich, presents us with a suggested approach. She helps children realize that they have fingers, noses, feet, eyes, and brains. They can make things out of pipe cleaners or just stuff around. Experience means to experiment.

Perhaps television with it's all-seeing eye can bring to us some of the experiences, the experimenting, that meant so much to children who grew up twenty-five to fifty years ago. They had lots of unclassified, unorganized experiences. Why not show grandpa and others making things--sometimes on their own, sometimes for children. Let children ask simple, naive questions about what is being made. Or maybe we could have adults watching other adults making things--weaving, whittling, cooking, painting, building and so on.

I am making the point here that viewing television need be neither passive nor limiting as far as direct experience is concerned. It can involve the most active kind of listening and viewing. It can move its viewers in the direction of more "direct" experience. It can motivate, the key essential in learning.

Certainly television can help us see problems more clearly, help us formulate them. Maybe one of television's greatest values for education will be in raising issues, helping students see problems where they did not see them before, helping them pin point and nail down their own problems. Isn't it true that the most important part of an education is to discover what our problems really are in contradistinction to the ideas of

what we initially think they are, or of accepting someone else's idea of what our problems really are.

For example, is the problem of the University of Wisconsin that of finding able, creative young men and women to take the place of the older faculty now moving off the scene? If so stated, then one thinks of other colleges and universities that can be robbed. So conceived Harvard robs Ohio State of its young, able economists, Ohio State robs Kentucky and so on. But if one thinks of the problem in another way, we ask how can we create, not merely find, more able young instructors. In our search for talents are we discriminating against women, against Negroes? How about more money for fellowships? And so on.

Is our problem as adults that of winning friends and influencing people? So stated, then flattery, cajolery, salesmanship, being liked become central problems. But if the analysis is wrong, if the problem is how to advance the purposes of inclusive groups to which we belong, then the problem must be stated differently. Can educational television make its viewers more problem-analysis centered, less answer-dominated?

III

All of this preceding discussion may seem like running a mile to jump over the creek. But television is in its formative stages. We can bend it to our purposes of having it be an instrument for presenting answers to problems--like a typical course--or we can use television for the flexible thing that it is--a fluid, many-faceted, many-powered instrument for communication.

Do I mean, then, that we should not have formal courses on television. Of course not. I think we should have them. But I merely ask is this the metier of television, the thing it does best of all? I don't think so. I think television is a great showcase for life in its sentient, relatively unclassified, informal aspects. It is personal, friendly, engaging. It is the cracker-barrel rather than the formal course. It is an informal

friendly visit, not a formal call. It is low-powered, relatively slowly-paced, not swift and high-powered.

The criterion I would set up would often involve the query: is it fun to watch? Suppose we do a little exercise in this. Here are some things that are fun to watch. It's fun to watch children learning new skills. I just watched a four-year-old climb up and down on an out-door fireplace, take his kitty with him, jump off, climb up again. He did it ten times. He had learned to use his rubber-soled shoes as a leverage device. It was like the ten-month-old boy who did the same thing when he stood up. Both were terribly pleased when they succeeded.

Orangutangs, chimps, most animals are fun to watch. It is fun to watch people make things like cakes, or houses, or big holes in the ground. It is fun to watch how things work--a speedometer, an adding machine, a pull-over stitcher for making shoes, a pretzel-bender--old style and new. Not only is it fun to watch but television can stimulate action.

In 1952 over forty-one million visited our national parks--twice the pre-war record. State parks had over one hundred twenty million visitors. Television can bring the Great Outdoors indoors and stimulate travel thereby.

I have said that television is a many-faceted device--multi-dimensional. It has great powers of motivation. It does unusually well as an informal device which raises problems, helps people think through their own problems. Indeed as we use educational television I would like to see its power to raise and analyze problems and motivate problem-solving made use of.

By this I do not mean to criticize in the least the formal course. But when we have the organized course, let's exploit the possibilities of the medium. Sustained attention even in a classroom is hard to get. One study shows that college students are paying attention to the instructor and what is going on class-wise only about fifty per cent of the time. The television teacher may have a harder time.

Here is where other visual media will help. Late comers to the television class should be able to see the points already made--on the chalkboard, on an easel. The structure of the presentation must be made crystal clear. The tone should be informal. The speaker, lecturer, teacher, must be unusually sensitive to the audience. He must teach agreeably.

Where we are presenting material that has a formal structure, an organic structure, I think we should show this structure to the audience. The late comers then will know what we have been talking about.

Thus in discussing the growth of a new habit or idea even like television we might show four stages:

1. Unconscious Inefficiency
2. Conscious Inefficiency
3. Conscious Efficiency
4. Unconscious Efficiency

Note that the program I've describe has a developmental sequence. It is in four acts and the viewer knows that there is a clear-cut structure that is being followed. He will more likely stick around when this is so.

IV

What are some other characteristics of television? Television is ephemeral. Now you see and hear it and now you don't. It moves on like life itself. This makes for interest, for change, for versatility. But it does lead to obvious disadvantages. A film that you don't quite understand can be repeated once, twice. But you either get the television program right away or you don't get a chance to repeat.

Yet even here we can use the medium wisely. We can learn to demonstrate with skill. We can repeat the key points so that few will make mistakes. We can get the necessary feedback from the trainee, the student and the audience present: their

questions can give us feedback, the kind of thing Plato criticized books for--lack of reader reaction.

Where are all our programs coming from? Initially we shall get many of them from the Educational Television and Radio Center. With a heavy load of broadcasting much of our material will have to be on film. I hope that the NAEB and similar organizations will see these films as material to be studied, to be evaluated, as patterns worthy of thoughtful imitation. But I would put great emphasis on developing local teachers--persons who could get lots of ideas by looking at kinescopes--and then develop their own live programs.

I have a hunch that a new definition of extension teaching is in the making. We can demonstrate superbly well with television. Why not use our home demonstration people there rather than in the field? It is hard to take along the necessary equipment for demonstration in the field. Why not televise it?

With artful charts and drawings, sound films, panels and the like we can present a topic like world trade in a way now impossible in the typical college class. If we want to extend important concepts in political science, sociology, marketing to the farthest borders of our state, isn't this the way to do it?